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FIELDS OF FAITH

A STUDY IN COMPARATIVE RELIGIONS

BY

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CRICHTON CLARKE

(Co-Author of Khu and Crane-Clarke Disarmament Debate)

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DEDICATED TO E. M. C. C.

"O God of Justice!—Bear with us!!
"While we our mortal needs discuss.
"We cannot work from day to day
"With thought that we're but transient clay.
"We cannot b'lieve that we have come
"From nothing into all this hum.
"Past lives have written on our soul
"Indelibly a hidden scroll.
"And in some future life we'll learn
"Its secrets into sight to turn.
"We b'lieve in everlasting force
"Whose changing forms ne'er stop its course.
"We b'lieve the same about the soul.
"Its history is an endless whole.
"Though bodies change, the soul endures,
"And through a stream of lives matures."

C. C.

FOREWORD!

Religions and philosophies are appraisable by their attitude toward the soul, its existence, development and destiny.

So analysed, the basic theories of life fall into four main systems:

(1) Materialism. Man has no soul, lives once, and dies forever.

(2) Orthodoxy. Man is born with a new soul, dies, and is translated eternally to some Hell, Heaven, or Happy Hunting Ground.

(3) Nirvanism. Man lives many times, thousands of years usually elapsing between incarnations, and his soul finally finds stillness in Nirvana.

(4) Developmentism. Man lives a number of quickly recurring lives upon earth and thus develops his soul through experience, spiritual evolution, individual ownership and private initiative until he has earned a right of promotion to some higher career of further soul-development on another plane.

I venture to predict that those of us who believe that justice rules the earth will slowly and perhaps reluctantly be forced to embrace the doctrine of Developmentism with its belief in real equality of opportunity and soul-development through plural lives.

Faith and Proof are religious alternatives. When proof arrives Faith loses its occupation.

Lacking proof of the truth of either of the basic systems of Materialism, Orthodoxy, Nirvanism or Developmentism, the four main characters in the little verses which follow, suffering from the current religious demoralization, concluded to meet in a miniature religious convention and endeavor to formulate a creed based on the conviction that religion is the essence of

education and the greatest of Public Utilities, and that mankind instead of asking for eternal bliss as a gift of God, should endeavor to earn it by striving to convert this world into a School of Happiness the post graduates of which may be regarded as having acquired sufficient of the principles, practice and manners of happiness to be invited into the High Heavens without embarrassment to either themselves or God.

I hope you will enjoy meeting all of them.

C. C.

"Sanquhar"
Mountain Lakes,
New Jersey.

FIELDS OF FAITH

BY

CRICHTON CLARKE

I

I sing about religious force,
And how it steers its mighty course.
The economic motive makes
For industry but never slakes
The deepest craving in man's soul,
The hunger for a God and Goal.
The search for gold gives man desire.
The search for God sets him on fire.
I write about life's greatest theme,
The subject of man's highest dream.
I sing of pretty twins and youth,
Of Alice, Ruth and Nannette Truth.
I sing about sweet Suki Yap
With obi and with braided cap.
I tell about their fields of faith,
And of the creed which all now saith.

II

We long have known the twins of Truth
Who vowed they'd ne'er outlive their youth
If Life involved a single lie;
By far, they'd both prefer to die.
And Suki Yap, we know her well.
A dozen lies she'd rather tell
Than suffer e'en a speck of pain
Or melancholy, grief or strain.

The intercourse of these three maids
For years endured without tirades.
Their intimacy close began
Upon the island of Japan.
The twins were baptized Alice, Ruth,
And had a sister, Nannette Truth,
Of older years and quieter mind;
A student, grave, sedate and kind.

III

Old Father Truth, while in Japan
Engaged himself on triple plan.
He owned and ran a trader's store;
He studied deeply Nature's lore;
And speculated far and wide
Upon religious truth, beside.
He practiced all the arts of trade;
And biologic trips he made
To jungle and to ocean cave;
And heathen souls he sought to save.
In Church on Faith he placed reliance,
But in the Open turned to science.
On Sabbaths he communed with God;
In midweek, studied stones and sod;
And in his store hours shrewdly traded
Clocks and knives for silk goods graded.

IV

An honest man and good was he
Who could not find a theory
Which filled his life in all its phases,
Or swept it clear of doubts and mazes.
He Sunday b'lieved "Trust every man"
But Monday each account he'd scan.
On Sunday he believed the world
In God-made flood had once been furl'd;
That seven days had been enough

To create all terrestrial stuff.
But when with microscopic lens
He wandered through the fields and fens,
And read the rocks like yellow teeth
Which spelled the age of earth beneath,
He saw that week's creation stretched
Until imagination retched.
And Sunday's God shrank down so small
'Twas hard rememb'ring Him at all.

V

In Sabbath moods all cheats and lies
Brought fire and anger to his eyes;
And usury of six per cent
Beneath his condemnation bent.
The story of the needle's eye
Gave wealth and luxury the lie.
But man must eat 'tween prayers and speeches,
And trade peculiar morals teaches.
To swap his clocks for silk or jute
He needed cheats and lies taboot.
To grant a loan he was content
With nothing less than ten per cent.

VI

Now Father Truth in studying science
On Ruthie Truth placed great reliance;
While Alice Truth shared his belief
In Eden's sin and human grief;
And Suki Yap the Buddhist maid
Assisted him in store and trade.
In time, the theories of the three
Were just as crossed as crossed could be.
In fact, the motivating force
Of all their deepening discourse
Arose from out the constant strain
Of faiths diverse as joy and pain.

The three ignored each others' b'liefs,
But day by day felt mounting griefs,
Until a single phrase could start
The feelings buried in each heart.

VII

Said Alice Truth in accents blue:
"Only the good things can be true."
But Ruthie Truth, I understood,
Said: "Only true things can be good."
While Suki Yap when asked her say
Said: "Take it, dears, in either way.
"I find I like the good the best
"When from some wrong I am depressed.
"I've learned that virtue overdone
"Makes even evil seem like fun.
"I long have thought that soulful lies
"Are things which only fools despise.
"Until you've lied," she said to Ruth,
"You can't appreciate the truth.
"Finally," said the naughty maid,
"Deception is the soul of trade."

VIII

Now Alice Truth was greatly stirred
And to the other's thoughts demurred.
"It's certain you will go to hell
"If you continue lies to tell.
"And virtue as sin's appetizer
"Will put you in the devil's geyser.
"I believe in balance, breadth and poise,
"But balancing of sins and joys,
"Of vice and virtue, lies and truth,
"By far transcends the powers of youth.
"You'll find the balance daily tips
"And further toward the evil slips.
"For lies and truths you cannot splice,
"Nor compromise for long with vice."

IX

But Ruthie Truth could not contain
Her deep dissent within her brain.
“Why quarr’l with lies yet utter them?
“Yours flood of fibs I haste to stem.
“You speak of hell, and I must say
“I don’t see how you get that way.
“Why don’t you study up on science
“And bid those foolish thoughts defiance?
“There is no hell in which to wallow,
“No God, no Heaven, no life to follow.
“This life is all; there is none after.
“Fill it full of fun and laughter.
“Tell lies or truth, the only test
“Is; which plan suits one life the best?”

X

“Now I may lie,” said Suki Yap,
“To keep from suff’ring worse, mayhap.
“But never would I tell a lie
“Like ‘All is ended when we die,’
“Or ‘All began when we were born’.
“B’lieving such stuff, I’d be forlorn.
“We all have lived through lives before
“And, after death, we’ll live through more.
“You say that we should eat and drink
“Until in death’s morass we sink.
“You try that plan one life alone
“And through a thousand lives you’ll groan.”

XI

While Alice Truth an “After-Life”
Conceded freely without strife,
She rose in wrath and took the floor
To question flatly “Lives-Before.”
“How dare you say our souls are old,

"Or that we've lived past lives untold?
"We live but once on this our earth,
"Then God determines what we're worth.
"He calls us for a Heavenly crown
"Or to the devil sends us down.
"A spotless soul we each receive
"To guard from birth until we leave."

XII

"That's crazy," said the Japanese,
"Begging your pardon, if you please.
"If each of us receives at birth
"A brand-new soul of standard worth,
"Why is it some are black as sin
"And others shining white within?
"A man can standardize a Ford.
"Who standardizes souls? The Lord?
"With bodies diff'ring every way,
"Some dark as night, some light as day,
"Some small, some large, some straight, some curved,
"Some calm as stone and some unnerved,
"What makes you think their souls are new?
"What makes you think that lie is true?"

XIII

"If souls are new at body's birth,"
Continued Suki, "How on earth
"Could some with crippled bodies fly
"To glorious heights before they die
"While some with perfect faculties
"Prefer with life to play and tease?
"For why should clean and equal souls
"All strive for such divergent goals?
"Man's inner soul in time will write
"Its deepest secrets in plain sight.
"A blackened soul will twist his face.
"A secret sin will leave its trace.
"And if our souls were new at birth
"They'd show less ancient-wounds of earth."

XIV

"Of course," said Ruth to Suki Yap,
"To me life seems to be a trap.
"We are mere glowing protoplasm
"With now a thrill and now a spasm.
"A soul? What makes you think you own one?
"What makes you ever think you've grown one?
"Our monkey forebears had no souls.
"They were plain apes with empty poles.
"And we their natures still retain
"With just a trifle bigger brain.
"Why talk of souls in other sphere?
"We haven't any souls right here."

XV

"Of course," said Suki Yap, "to me
"The thought of monkeys in a tree
"As ancestors does not appall.
"It's better far than Eden's Fall.
"An ape evolving toward a God
"Is finer than a sodden clod
"That, once a man, became a beast
"From eating of the Serpent's feast.
"Man could not even hold his own.
"From Eden's gateway he was thrown.
"His bliss a gift, not something earned;
"His fall not e'en a lesson learned."

XVI

"No, dear," said Suki, "Darwin's lie
"Is not that ants toward angels fly,
"But merely that they have no soul,
"No vestige of Inside Control.
"The Lower Souls are working up.
"Ne'er from their lips was Eden's cup
"Dashed as they drank; they work their way

"And, reaching Eden, there will stay.
"Yes! Step by step their road they plod
"From tadpoles all the way to God.
"Not Pawns of Bliss, devoid of soul;
"They work their way and pay their toll."

XVII

"And why," said Ruthie with a smirk,
"Should animals have all this work
"Before they're born in human form?
"Why all these lives of strife and storm,
"This mighty toil, for end so small
"It cannot recompense at all?"

XVIII

"I'll tell you why!" Suk' Yap replied.
"You think man's evil multiplied.
"You think he's slothful, murd'rous, mean,
"Lying, trait'rous and unclean;
"But I maintain that, at his worst,
"He's miles above a thing accurst.
"The little evil he performs
"Is as a draft to tropic storms
"Compared with what he'd do if he
"Employed his worst iniquity.
"For even though man's sinning mounts,
"It's what he doesn't do that counts."

XIX

"Animals have but little power,"
Said Suki softly, "in their hour.
"Their minds though good are circumscribed.
"Within their beaten paths they're tribed.
"They never could unhinge a world.
"No poison gas they far have hurled.
"They never strive to pry the lid

"Where Nature has her secrets hid.
"And yet their neatly ordered lives,
"Their instincts and their buzzing hives,
"Their habits and their seasoned flights,
"Their finely balanced appetites,
"All serve to discipline the soul
"And place it under strong control.
"And so their souls are partly molded
"Before as mortals they're unfolded."

XX

"And now," said Ruthie in her way,
"While you are having all the say,
"Tell why this soulful temp'ring's done.
"Where rest the souls when all is run?
"Toward what far distant shining goal
"Does God or Buddha guide the soul?
"For what high deeds are mortals made
"That Fate so shapes them like a blade?
"Into Celestial motor cars
"Shall we be made as cogs and bars?
"Or shall we be like children's toys
"Soon thrown aside for other joys?"

XXI

"A trick's concealed within your query,"
Said Suki Yap, "yet I am very
"Glad to answer straight and true.
"It seems improbable to you
"That God should mold our souls with care
"And then dissolve them into air.
"You cannot see what satisfaction
"God has in fitting us for action
"And then dissolving every soul
"Into a still, pervading Whole.
"And yet there is no paradox
"In souls as still as run-down clocks."

XXII

"There is no stillness like the one
"Of wine whose 'fermentation's done.
"There is no purity like that
"Of liquor settled clear and flat.
"There is no roundness such as comes
"From rolling clay between the thumbs.
"There are no further glows nor flashes
"Left in burned out, cooled-off ashes;
"And when the soul has spent its action
"There is no greater satisfaction
"Than floating quietly at ease
"Within Nirvana's death-like seas."

XXIII

"So then," said Ruth to Suki Yap,
"We both believe the same, mayhap.
"We both believe there is a death
"Which comes with me at end of breath,
"And comes with you at end of action.
"Well, if there's any satisfaction
"Believing that Nirvana's End
"Will ordinary death transcend,
"Why then, my dearest Japanese,
"Believe whichever one you please.
"To me, Nirvan's deliciousness
"Is like my death's maliciousness."

XXIV

"It's strange to me," continued Ruth,
"That you and I have found the truth
"That life somewhere comes to its end.
"But Alice dear will now contend
"That life in Heaven goes on forever;
"That nothing can existence sever.
"While she and I about life's start

"Are not a single word apart.
"So, taking it by rule of threes,
"I'm part of two majorities.
"For two support a final end,
"And two a single birth defend."

XXV

"Ah, but you'll say," continued Ruth:
"Nirvana gives us conscious truth.
"Each problem of our soul is settled;
"No more with error are we nettled;
"And yet, without conceit or pride,
"In conscious stillness we abide.
"It is not life, it is not death;
"It has no pulse, no thrill, no breath,
"It's conscious mind without a thought;
"Without a problem to be fought;
"And yet, with neither thought nor strife,
"It is the Everlasting Life."

XXVI

"Nirvanic doctrine seems to me
"A thing self-contradictory.
"There is no half-way point, no mean,
"The poles of life and death between.
"We're either dead or we're alive;
"We either work or think or strive,
"Or else we're consciousless in death,
"Without a stir of mind or breath.
"You say Nirvana knows all things;
"All wisdom and all sufferings.
"That means, Nirvana has a past
"Without a future to contrast.
"That means, Nirvana has a mind
"Without a thought on which to grind."

XXVII

"And I, with all the strength of youth,"
Continued fiercely Ruthie Truth,
"Assert that knowledge kills the mind;
"Produces boredom unrefined.
"The mind on ignorance must gnaw
"Like dog with bone beneath the paw.
"Not e'en your God could stand the strain,
"The dull, the still, the death-like pain,
"Of knowing naught He did not know;
"Of knowing not one place to go
"Where He could find a feeling new,
"Or problem to be tussled through.
"If I believed in God alive
"I'd know that He, like I, must strive.
"And when He has no more ahead
"To struggle through, I'd know He's dead!"

XXVIII

"Nirvana's just another name
"For death that's pale and slow and tame.
"It's death with shadow cast before;
"It's death in life forevermore.
"It teaches man that he is born
"All act and exercise to scorn.
"It teaches him his mind to still
"Until inaction it shall kill.
"It teaches him the arrant drivell
"Of holding up his arm to shrivel.
"It teaches him the funeral dirge
"Of killing all emotional urge.
"While in some aspects it is hazy,
"It teaches a religion lazy.
"On energy it places clamps
"And has strong lure for spiritu'l tramps.
"An adept never needs Death's Clout;
"He's dead, but hasn't found it out."

XXIX

"Among the cloying, dreamy drugs
"Which man, to still his misery, hugs,
"I classify this Buddhist maze
"Which keeps the slothful East a-daze;
"This doctrine, only fit for slaves;
"An epitaph for living graves;
"A chain that binds the serf far better
"Than foreign empire's strongest fetter.
"The autocratic empire's aim
"Should be Nirvana to acclaim
"In all the lands it hopes to rule.
"Nirvana's slavery's sweetest school.
"The fastest thinking brain 'twould still;
"The highest of ambitions, kill.

XXX

"The empire, if 'twere wise, would ban
"Every missionary man,
"And all the Buddhist clans endow
"To spread Nirvana's clogging slough.
"But empire's baffling paradox
"Is that, abroad, it wants the ox;
"While, home, it needs the freeman's fire
"To make its ramparts stronger, higher.
"This paradox, the Japanese
"Have grasped and used with skill and ease.
"They've quickened their domestic pace,
"While stamping strong on every trace
"Of native energy nearby;
"And helping mission men to die."

XXXI

"There're only two great groups of men,
"The slaves and freemen, in our ken.
"These groups are known by many names
"And are disposed in various frames.

“Autocracy is but a word
“For slav’ry in a form deferred.
“The terms of slav’ry long have passed;
“The forms of slav’ry with us last.
“The autocrat is the survivor
“Oh him who once was called slave-driver.
“And autocrats to slaves are bound.
“The same chains close them both around;
“While freemen with no chains are tied
“As master-groom to slave as bride.”

XXXII

“Now in the fight,” said Ruthie Truth,
“Of autocratic age with youth,
“We need all weapons we can hold.
“We need reforms and theories bold.
“The greatest enemy to fight
“Is that cruel, single God of Might,
“Omniscient and Omnipotent.
“Beneath His yoke mankind is bent.
“He is the symbol of All-Power;
“Before Him men like servants cower.
“He is the autocratic God,
“The wielder of the Driver’s Rod.
“If Democrats must hold belief
“In foolish gods or come to grief,
“Then let them choose a president
“For those in Heaven resident.
“From time to time a Heavenly election
“To President-God would give correction;
“And even add to Heaven’s pleasure,
“By carrying there, excitement’s treasure.”

XXXIII

“And you, my dearest Japanese,”
Said Ruthie in a way to please,
“If you would see the East be free

“From autocratic tyranny
“Go shout the tidings far and wide
“That East must find a faster stride;
“And on Nirvana fiercely frown;
“That East must cease its slowing down;
“Its energies need stirring up;
“Far should it cast the opium cup;
“The God of Stillness it should throw
“Into the deepest pit below;
“Let East scrap every God it has!
“Throw down the Joss, and raise the Jazz!”

XXXIV

“And all of us of Western blood
“Should stem the autocratic flood;
“Should raise our watchmen to the tower;
“Should train our bodies ’gainst the hour
“When we shall wade through war to peace
“At which autocracies shall cease.
“The best democracies are prone
“To let too many things alone.
“The man will fight to get the vote
“And frown on women who devote
“E’en peaceful means to that same end.
“Democracy will have no friend.
“A nation gaining freedom’s sway
“Will turn its eyes the other way
“From alien lands which seek to drink
“Of liberty before they sink.”

XXXV

“The test of true democracy
“Is what ’twill do to help to free
“It’s weaker brothers who are bound
“By foreign masters to the ground.
“How can we test the freeman’s worth
“Who will not help another birth

“Of freedom in a foreign land?
“Who selfishly neglects to stand
“Where he can shield his weaker brother
“Whom vile autocracy would smother?
“With ancient wisdom we’re provided:
“ ‘Ruin awaits a world divided.’
“One world is not enough to hold
“Both slave and freeman in its fold.
“It can’t be both. Which shall it be:
“The dungeon, or democracy?”

XXXVI

“And if we would be freedom’s knights,
“Assisting in its furthest fights;
“If we would lend the helping hand
“To the oppressed in every land;
“If we would join our strength to theirs
“To blight the autocrat’s affairs;—
“We should attack this mirror maze
“This death in life, this strangling daze,
“This freezing thought which would congeal
“The life force ’neath a cold, hard heel,
“This nerveless, this Nirvanic dream
“Which aims to stop the human stream,
“Which seeks to paralyze man’s arm
“And even more his mind would harm.
“The freeman of the West should aid
“Those whom the autocrats degrade.”

XXXVII

“Two things oppress the placid East:
“A drug-like dream and a foreign beast!
“Two things oppress the bounding West:
“A heedless and a selfish zest,
“And that divinity of kings—
“The God of Power and Pillagings.”

XXXVIII

"Well, what a merry scientist
"We're entertaining in our midst!"
The Japanese with gay laugh said.
"There's more than science in that head!
"She wants such tiny little things!
"She wishes to dethrone the kings!
"To upset God and all His works!
"There's nothing this reformer shirks!
"In Heaven, she desires elections,
"With candidates, campaigns, rejections!
"On earth she wants domestic peace!
"And foreign wars that never cease!
"Into the so-called 'placid' East
"She would inject a little yeast!
"The foreign ruler must be kicked out!
"Nirvanic lethargy be picked out!
"The Joss must go with incense dreamy,
"To pave the way for music screammy!
" 'Tis plain she thinks she'll live but once;
"Who would return except a dunce?"

XXXIX

"But tell me, Ruth," said Suki Yap,
"To what would all this lead, mayhap?
"With East and West both going strong;
"With no slow ones to pull along;
"With all our wars fought out and finished;
"With all our mortal woes diminished;
"What would be that far-off event
"Toward which these energies were bent?"

XL

" 'Tis obvious to me," said Ruth,
"That we can never reach full truth.
"Nor could we stand it if we did.

“There always must be something hid.
“If truth came forth the race would die.
“Non-use would kill both mind and eye.
“But pain we can eliminate,
“And gradu’ly improve our state.
“We’ve learned to breed a perfect horse,
“And perfect men we’ll breed, of course.
“’Twill take much time; but then, you see,
“That’s nothing to eternity.
“For nature has the time to burn;
“Through myriad centuries she’ll learn.”

XLI

“Each generation as it grows
“Will find before it lesser foes.
“For every pain that touches man
“He will exchange some subtle plan.
“For every task which keeps him lean,
“He’ll substitute some strong machine.
“Each thing that makes his body sick,
“He’ll countercheck with subtle trick.
“Some day he’ll turn the Fever Age
“Into the wheel and lever stage.
“Each painful task, he will bore through it,
“And let the Iron and Steam Men do it.”

XLII

“And every effort he releases,
“As labor after labor ceases,
“Will be converted into joy.
“The universe will be man’s toy.
“He’ll sharpen every appetite.
“He’ll plumb the sea and skim the height.
“He’ll tune his senses ever higher.
“He’ll trample out all duty’s fire.
“The hardened face of life he’ll paint
“In colors gay; and all restraint

"He'll cast away. He'll suck life's juice,
"And throw its hard rind to the deuce.
"He'll pick out all life's flaws and pains,
"And eat the whole of what remains.
"Why should he not? He lives but once!
"If he did less, he'd be a dunce."

XLIII

"Of course," said Suki Yap, "if I
"Were sure my end was when I die,
"I'd be as wicked as could be;
"Although I'm sure I fail to see
"That you live up to what you teach.
"The moral law, you never breach.
"For lies, you have a wholesome scorn.
"As Devil's Imp, you're most forlorn.
"Maybe your morals are so stout
"Because these Darwin thoughts you doubt?
"If you were sure that death's the end,
"Who knows how far you would descend?
"But that aside, the thing I fear
"Is: if at future life you jeer,
"You'll hurt your soul; you'll hypnotize
"Your very spirit with such lies.
"Then when in time your body dies
"Your soul will be too drugged to rise."

XLIV

"To this extent," said Suki Yap,
"Our two divergent theories lap.
"You b'lieve that death's the end of all,
"And I believe your belief will stall
"Your very soul; will stop its course
"And petrify its every force.
"That does not mean that death will kill
"Your very soul, but thinking will!
"Why kill your spirit when you die?
"You cannot keep what you deny."

XLV

The elder sister, Nannette Truth
Listening to the words of Ruth.
And to the thoughts of Al' and Suk'
Here broke in with her mild rebuke:
"Of course," said Nannette Truth, "to me
"It looks like Dum and Tweedledee.
"For Suki Yap is much afraid
"That when Ruth in her grave is laid
"The soul she has will have been killed
"By skeptic thoughts with which she's filled;
"But Suki Yap, to me it seems,
"Is harb'ring just as crazy dreams.
"You both toward soulful suicide
"Are floating fast on error's tide.
"I'd just as lief be dead as dirt,
"As in Nirvana be inert.
"Yet Alice also strays, I think.
"She b'lieves in Heaven but bliss we'll drink.
"But if wrong thoughts the soul will still,
"And then inaction it will kill,
"Why death can be the only end
"To which your three religions tend.
"Ruth b'lieves the soul will pass with breath;
"And Suk and Al will meet soul-death;
"The one beneath Nirvana's kiss,
"The other crushed by Heaven's bliss."

XLVI

"But if there's doubt," continued Nan
"Which theory hurts the life of man,
"Or which would kill his soul the first,
"I believe that Suki Yap's the worst.
"I believe Nirvana hurts the soul,
"And on the body lays its toll.
"While Ruthie dear's philosophy
"Would pack so much of energy

“Into one life, it seems to me,
“That not e’en Death could slow it down.
“When on Ruth’s brow death puts his crown,
“And opens up the gates of death,
“She’ll rob him quick of all his breath
“By shooting through at such a pace,
“A streak will form the only trace
“To mark where Ruthie left her ‘wake’.
“The soft repose of death she’ll shake.
“She might be dead, but I would doubt
“That she would ever find it out.
“Of chloroform they’d use enough
“A cat’s entire nine lives to snuff,
“And then their efforts she would stall
“By forcing them for more to call.”

XLVII

“But what I really want to say,”
Continued Nannette in her way,
“Concerns Ruth’s half immoral thought
“That life is something to be bought
“Without a pain if we but know
“The way to make the cog wheels go.
“Life as Mechanical Contrivance
“Would have the devil’s deep connivance.
“A life lived through without a pain
“Would make the soul in hell remain.
“For life is iron in the crude;
“It must be shaped on anvils rude;
“It must be hammered out with blows,
“When hot with pain, until it glows.
“It must be kept from stain and rust
“By constant wear and use—it must!
“If stopped and rested overlong
“It never is again so strong.”

XLVIII

"Life never gives us strength or speed.
"It merely plants in us their need.
"Life gives us merely flesh and bone
"Which we can use or let alone.
"The body which receives no use
"Cannot survive such grave abuse.
"The soul that will not hurt itself
"Is fattening as Satan's pelf.
"The man whose life contained no pain
"Would waste like soil without the rain."

XLIX

"But do not think," said Nannette Truth,
"That all I preach is pain, forsooth.
"I mean that every man should seek
"The point at which his spirit's weak,
"And there he'll find that effort, pain,
"Will turn his weakness into gain.
"The training of the boyish scout
"Requires each day he shall seek out
"Some deed of kindness or relief;
"And adults need a like belief.
"Two things each day each mortal needs:
"Each should perform two separate deeds.
"One deed to others is addressed;
"The second's on himself assessed.
"The first should be a kindly deed
"To someone in distress or need,
"The next should be a deed of pain
"To make life's iron with us remain."

L

"It's not enough to shower good
"On friends or foes. For pains withstood
"Are what our souls require as food.

“The Christ upon the bloody rood
“Depicts the climax of a Soul
“Which on itself had laid its toll.
“The thieves who hung on either hand
“Could not avoid the law’s command.
“But Christ need merely speak a word
“And all His foes would be deterred.
“If He had merely scattered good
“His pain might not have been withstood.
“For every kindness given out,
“Some inner pain His soul made stout.
“And when the cross on Him was laid
“His soul was strong and not afraid.”

LI

“And so, dear Ruthie, man would find
“That if his pains he’d leave behind,
“His spirit with his pains would go,
“And neither strength nor will he’d know.
“And if some strange misguided fate
“All pain should wipe from off man’s slate,
“He’d soon be forced to create pain,
“If he would any soul retain.
“You know of men who love their work
“So much that other play they shirk.
“They stunt their souls, neglect their wives,
“Forget their children, starve their lives.
“They’re slaves to work like sodden drug;
“Their virtues as a vice they hug.
“Their weakened souls they plain betray
“Because from labor they can’t stray.
“Such men should take up play again;
“Should hurt themselves with mirthful strain;
“Their work’s perverted into play;
“Become the pastime of their day,
“And lost its right to name of work,
“A thing we’d always rather shirk.”

LII

“That great Confed’rate general, Lee,
“Perverted war was quick to see
“As something which man loved so much
“He could not sense its sordid touch.
“When war or work can overpower
“A man’s distaste for both, the hour
“Is reached when selfish man should turn
“To peace or play, e’en though they burn.
“And so Ruth’s dream—the Painless Age—
“Would be a vegetable stage
“Of soft-skinned men with vanished souls,
“Or else a world of callous goals;
“Of living ghouls whose pleasure lay
“In war or grinding life away;
“Whose calloused souls could not retain
“A mark of pleasure or of pain.”

LIII

“No, dear, you’re wrong,” said Nanette Truth,
Continuing to speak to Ruth,
“The world advances, and the pain
“Of sordid kind and type is slain.
“The pains of poverty, disease,
“And cruelty which on man squeeze
“Shall be put down; and then we must
“Place more and more our wealth in trust,
“For every man; this on the ground
“That wealth distributed around
“Will give to every man his chance
“And all the powers of life enhance.
“But as mankind wards off attacks
“Of poverty and things it lacks
“Man’s energies as thus released
“Must not pervert him to a beast
“But must be turned to higher planes,
“To self-development by pains;

“To exercise of faculty,
“To growth of mind and subtlety;
“To welding bodies strong and lithe;
“To making science give its tithe
“So every man will learn to use
“His bent or talent, skill or muse.”

LIV

“And so that this shall not become
“A blinded grope or shallow hum,
“Let man his destiny affirm
“As more than that of newt or worm.
“Let science and religion meet
“To formulate a plan complete,
“And into their convention ask
“Economists to aid their task,
“And ordinary laymen who
“Know just what trials they have been through.
“Let this convention draw a line,
“A shifting one, and not too fine,
“Between the known and unknown things,
“And over them create two kings.
“The Kingdom of the Known belongs
“To science with its earthly thongs.
“The Kingdom of the Higher Faith
“Belongs to those who say ‘Thus saith’.”
“These kingdoms of the near and far,
“Stretching from earth to farthest star,
“Should each allegiance give to both,
“And swear the same by solemn oath.
“The men of science should stake their claims,
“Including all their widest aims,
“Yet keep to bound’ry line of fact.
“Beyond that, sacred hymn and tract,
“And inspiration, prayer and hope,
“Toward God on High should upward slope.
“No longer then should scientist
“Say: ‘What’s unproved must be dismissed.’

“Or: ‘what’s not known must be untrue,’
“Or even: ‘When man’s dead, he’s through.’
“No longer should religionists
“Dispute known truths with scientists.”

LV

“The motto of the two should be:
“‘Man has a higher destiny.’
“The ethic code of both should say:
“ ‘Whoe’er from man takes hope away
“ ‘Would kinder be to take his life,
“ ‘His dearest treasure, child or wife.’
“Man’s reach must e’er exceed his grasp;
“Science on faith should never rasp.
“Nay, men of science should lesson take
“From that old Roman who would make
“Each speech on every topic end:
“ ‘My brothers, Rome must Carthage rend.’
“Each scientist should close his pages
“With: ‘God’s through all the worlds and ages!’ ”

LVI

“This does not mean that aught’s taboo
“Against scientific boring through.
“It merely means: however far
“Extend the things that proven are,
“Both science and church should jointly say:
“ ‘Our b’lief extends still further ’way;
“Our faith outranges telescope;
“Beyond our sense extends our hope.’ ”

LVII

“But why, dear Nanette, may I ask,
“Would you essay this mighty task
“Of joining into brotherhood
“Those who at sep’rate poles have stood?”
The question came from Sister Ruth,
Apostle of the ruthless truth.

LVIII

"Because," said Nanette, "what we b'lieve
"Of unknown things should never grieve
"Nor sway the scientist in his search;
"But some beliefs can greatly smirch
"Man's satisfaction with his world.
"Within death's unknown realm is furled
"The secret of our soul's content;
"And even science was never meant
"To slay man's self-respect or hope,
"Or start him on a downward slope."

LIX

"There never should arise a fight
"To see if church or science is right.
"Man never has conceived a fact
"Which belief in God has rightly cracked.
"No contradictions e'er arise
" 'Tween fact on earth and God in skies.
"Nay, man can push his search afar,
"Through molecule or distant star,
"And never come upon a clue
"Which needs must prove his faith untrue.
"Man! Push your search! Be never loath!
"And fact or faith? Hold fast to both!"

LX

"But even though the man of fact
"A deep conviction always lacked
"That he had soul and destiny
"Still let him say: 'The test to me
"Between opposing negatives
"Is: Which one to the spirit gives
"The greatest fire and hope and plan?
"If death ends all then let me ban
"That theory as a shadow thrown

"Across the only life I own.
"I'll dress that life in colors gay.
"I'll tell myself I'm on my way
"To higher things, and hypnotize
"Myself with faith-inspiring lies.
"A single life? It's long enough
"Myself with fantasy to stuff."

LXI

"And I agree," said Suki Yap,
"With Nanette Truth. If life's a trap
"In which we're caught and held to die,
"We should embrace a happy lie.
"A man condemned to felon's fate
"Is comforted against death's date.
"In mortal illness, men give wine
"Or soothing drug or anodyne.
"The victim of the firing squad
"With hope is eased beneath the sod
"With that old tale of blank-filled gun
"And death that's feigned and chance to run.
"A single life? Then deck it out
"With thoughts that can dispel all doubt.
"A single life? Then why refrain
"From b'lieving we shall live again?"

LXII

"In joint convention, we shall find
"The scientists are not behind
"Religious men," said Nanette Truth,
"In stimulating age and youth.
"We'll find that not all scientists
"Are soul-denying pessimists.
"They never would have gone so far
"In their attempts man's faith to mar
"Except the church through centuries
"Had frowned on their discoveries;

"Had crucified, nay, stooped to burn
"The men who would from nature learn
"Her hidden secrets of the earth,
"Of sky or sea, of death, or birth.
"And censorship by church or state.
"Is apt to stir a scientist's hate."

LXIII

"Once get these men of divers minds
"Together, in concourse that binds,
"Their eyes would shift from ancient wrongs
"With pitying gaze to those vast throngs
"Of groping, stagg'ring humankind
"Who search some path of hope to find.
"The wish as father to the thought
"E'en greater truth to man has taught:
"That even science takes second place
"In eyes of a despairing race.
"E'en science must step aside for hope.
"All men must aid the blind who grope.
"And then these men a creed must state
"Which spells for man a higher fate
"Than food for bugs, than appetizer,
"Or animated fertilizer."

LXIV

"This lay convention must adopt
"That principle which long has propped
"Man's industry and held it strong:
"To him who works, the fruits belong.
"A man by whom is owned a farm
"Will guard his lands from every harm;
"Will plow his furrow, plant his hedge,
"Repair the fence along the edge.
"He'll farm the field with care and toil,
"He will refertilize the soil.
"But one who does not own the land

“Will rob its strength, nor turn a hand
“To make improvements aimed at waste,
“And with a raise in rent be faced.”

LXV

“They must affirm: man has a soul.
“It’s his to use, improve, control.
“It’s his to hurt or his to build.
“His is the gain if it grows skilled.
“His is the loss if power it loses.
“It grows whichever way he chooses.
“And all that in one life it gains
“Through other lives it still retains.
“There are incentives here to sow
“The seeds of good and watch them grow.
“From life to life the value rolls
“Of Private Ownership of Souls.”

LXVI

“That’s good,” said Suki Yap, “I’d like
“To see such men a bargain strike.
“If science and religion join
“A formula of faith to coin,
“ ’Twill help those stalled and blinded masses
“To find out where the Hope Trail passes.
“But, Nanette, do you comprehend
“The plan you advocate would end
“The dogmas of the Christian Church?
“Would leave Remission in the lurch?
“Forgiven Sins and Acts of Grace
“Would have to go—nor leave a trace!
“To him who works, the fruit belongs;
“Would never tolerate such wrongs
“As letting man pile up his debts,
“And have them dropt because he frets;
“Would never tolerate the thought
“That Christ’s pale agony had bought
“An unearned bliss for men forlorn,
“Whose forbears fell e’er they were born.”

LXVII

“Religious justice must divide
“Men into groups. On larger side
“Are those with faculties of mind;
“The others are deficient kind.
“Responsibility’s the test
“Which separates the two the best.
“Those who are immature or young,
“Those who into disease are flung,
“Those who are warped or twisted wry,
“Those who are old or soon to die,
“Those who by wine or drug are crushed,
“Those who are blind, whose voice is hushed
“Those whom environment has wronged,
“To second group always belonged.
“Such are a few of the defectives
“To whom man should apply correctives.
“They are not free, they cannot choose
“The right from wrong; they always lose
“In fighting ’gainst temptation’s urge.
“With them, impulse and action merge.
“Responsibility, control,
“No place can have in such a soul.
“Like children, they must be restrained,
“By outside rules, and props maintained
“Until, their character grown strong,
“They can be freed, and not go wrong.”

LXVIII

“But for all normal men, the law
“Is hardened justice, cold and raw.
“Of penalties, remove all doubt.
“Your sin will surely find you out;
“ ’Twill deeply mark and twist your soul;
“Of freedom you will lose control.
“You’ll put yourself by willing deeds
“In that class which a guardian needs.

"Make plain the law ; let no man say
"Who errs: 'I did not know the way,'
"E'en first offenders, treat with ease ;
"Apply to them mild penalties ;
"Yet harsh enough to lesson teach
"That they must stay without Law's reach."

LXIX

"And yet," the Japanese continued,
"If men to this reform you'd win, you'd
"Need to formulate as fact
"A faith without which West has lacked
"Conviction in a moral code
"Of justice as man's Only Road.
"No justice, man can see on earth
"Who b'lieves in but a single birth ;
"Who b'lieves each has a different start,
"Who b'lieves one man must play a part
"As beggar, cripple, tout or leech,
"With happiness beyond his reach,
"While others into bliss are born.
"Such theories make men justice scorn."

LXX

"You cannot teach men to be just
"To other men, or gain their trust ;
"You can't build faith in fair rewards ;
"You can't turn men from crime towards
"Just industry for just return,
"If into them at birth you burn
"The lesson deep that some are born
"To happiness, and some, forlorn,
"Are heirs to woe and foul disease.
"You say Nirvana's but a school
"For slaves that other men would rule.
"I say to you: a single birth
"Makes foul injustice rule the earth."

"I say to you: till men believe
"There is no wound which makes them grieve,
"That is not fruit of former life,
"Of former sin or wrongful strife,
"Man never can establish justice,
"Nor can he ever learn to trust his
"Priest or God. The lesson's plain:
"Man must his former faith regain
"In many lives; for Christ believed
"(Don't by church doctrine be deceived)
"That man could sin before his birth;
"That former lives he'd lived on earth."

LXXI

"The fact that mem'ry can't recall
"Our former lives, means naught at all.
"There're many deeds of childhood days
"We can't bring up to mem'ry's gaze.
"There're many men who've wholly lost
"Connection with the days they've crossed.
"Amnesia, aye, e'en but aphasia,
"Goes far to prove the Faith of Asia
"That man is born and born again,
"And for past wrongs feels present pain.
"Who but a fool would say that one
"Whose mem'ry of his past is done,
"Ne'er had a past! Yet that is all
"That's urged 'gainst lives we can't recall.
"Nay, who would say that one who sins
"And then forgets, nowhere begins
"To expiate those vanished wrongs,
"Or tribute pay where it belongs?"

LXXII

"Men can't be just throughout the week
"If Sunday teaches doctrines bleak.
"The church which but one life shall preach,

" 'Tween faith and justice makes a breach;
"But many lives, if strong affirmed,
"If warmly taught, and simply termed,
"Will weave into religious life
"The doctrine which in law is rife:
"That man gets that which he deserves;
"Reward from effort never swerves;
"That punishment shall never reach
"The man who does not statute breach;
"That present poverty arises
"From want of former enterprises."

LXXIII

"Yes, Suki's right," replied Nanette,
"A scheme of justice man must get;
"And that requires he must return
"To b'lief in Hells in which to burn
"And Heavens where he can have the sweet
"Which here on earth eludes his feet;
"Or else to Karma he must turn;
"To Buddha's teachings, there to learn
"That justice works through plural lives;
"That man gains that for which he strives;
"That nothing does not something earn;
"That good and bad, in kind, return.
"A single birth is so unjust
"That man in Heaven and Hell must trust
"To compensate the tangled bill,
"And all the voids of life thus fill.

LXXIV

"But Heaven and Hell are crude adjusters;
"And only real to easy trusters.
"They represent man's ardent hope
"That one life will his Heaven ope';
"That Heaven can be quickly gained
"By men in happiness untrained.

"How cheaply bought must be that Heaven
 "We gain in one life, 'stead of seven?
 "An infant church must build its strength
 "By preaching: 'Heaven has come at length,'
 "By shouting far: 'The Kingdom's here;
 "Repent and to your Lord draw near.'
 "But life is long. It stretches far.
 "And Heav'n is up beyond the star.
 "It can't be bought in one short life
 "'Tis only gained by toil and strife
 "Through many lives; and now man sees
 "That Heaven can't be won with ease;
 "That happiness on earth's a task
 "We've got to learn ere Heaven we ask.
 "Then, too," continued grave Nanette,
 "There's this objection to be met:
 "That while One Life wants endless bliss,
 "The Plural Lives at all life hiss.
 "The Eastern Dreamers long for death,
 "While West prays for eternal breath."

LXXV

"This lay convention, when it's held,
 "It seems to me, will be compelled
 "To parallel an endless life,
 "As shown by evolution's strife,
 "With doctrine of an endless soul
 "Which seeks through many lives: control;
 "Which seeks for happiness in work;
 "Which futile, endless bliss would shirk;
 "Which seeks development on high;
 "And which, if lazy long, would die."

LXXVI

"But while the world behind us lags;
 "While science in rear its chariot drags
 "The balking church; while men dispute;

"Let us alone the truth salute;
 "Let us in small convention meet;
 "Let's formulate a creed complete;
 "Let's make Utility the test
 "To find the faith that suits us best;
 "The faith that spurs us on to good;
 "The faith that has most likelihood
 "To make us proud that we're alive;
 "To urge us on each day to strive
 "To do what's right, to shun what's wrong;
 "To make our souls and bodies strong;
 "To suffer pains with fortitude;
 "To realize each buffet rude
 "Is just reaction from our past,
 "To teach a lesson which should last."

LXXVII

And so it was the maidens four
 Plunged into deep religious lore.
 They tried a creed to formulate
 Which would their several doctrines state.
 From day to day they labored on.
 Draft after draft they'd write and con;
 Till finally the four agreed
 Upon this little prayer and creed:

LXXVIII

"O God of Justice!—Bear with us! !
 "While we our mortal needs discuss.
 "We cannot work from day to day
 "With thought that we're but transient clay.
 "We cannot b'lieve that we have come
 "From nothing into all this hum.
 "Past lives have written on our soul
 "Indelibly a hidden scroll.
 "And in some future life we'll learn
 "Its secrets into sight to turn.

"We believe in everlasting force
"Whose changing forms ne'er stop its course.
"We believe the same about the soul.
"Its history is an endless whole.
"Though bodies change, the soul endures,
"And through a stream of lives matures."

LXXIX

"We believe in justice, courage, good;
"In kindness, and in pains withstood.
"We believe in patient search for truth;
"We believe in joy; in play; in youth.
"We believe in love immaculate;
"We disbelieve in chance or fate.
"We believe each man gets what he earns,
"In happiness or blows or burns.
"We believe in freedom for strong souls;
"For weak ones, in outside controls.
"We believe the aim of such restraint
"Is building strength for those who're faint.
"We believe responsibility
"Will come when in our faith we see
"That what we are is the result
"Of all our former lives' tumult;
"That what we do each day ordains
"Our future joys or future pains."

LXXX

"We believe we have both past and future
"Linked by present as a suture.
"We b'lieve a single life would mean
"There is no past or future e'en.
"If single life were all we had
"No act could be considered bad
"Unless it brought more pain than pleasure,
"More effort than was worth the treasure.
"We believe that man has many ills

“Because his science, religion kills;
“Because the men of fact and faith
“The humble man between betray’th.
“Ourselves, O God, as painted maids,
“Result from church and lay tirades.
“The scientists and ministers
“(Unless the one or other errs)
“Are liars both; we have their word;
“They fight while we grow up absurd.”

LXXXI

“O God, send peace upon this feud
“By science and religion brewed.
“How can we stop mere men from fighting,
“If supermen their faiths are blighting?
“The war which rages now between
“Man’s thirst for facts, and gods unseen,
“Is worse by far than war which sheds
“Its dangers on the soldiers’ heads.
“The wars of men, the body hurts,
“But spurs the soul to mighty spurts.
“The war of ideas kills the soul;
“Twists its axis; rends its pole.
“The center of man’s life is pride;
“And science would kill his soul inside;
“Would call him worm, or monkey’s spawn;
“A piece of animated brawn
“Which Nature, like a feudal State
“Consumes to feed a monstrous hate.”

LXXXII

“Oh God—show truth to Science’s eyes,
“Or else, for our sake, teach it lies!
“Let men of science see that we
“Are more than fact or subtlety!
“Let men of science learn that child
“Can be destroyed by theories wild;

“And so that science can surrender,
“Impress the priest, that arch-pretender,
“With thought that all men have a right
“To delve in myst’ries out of sight;
“That man may seek for hidden fact
“Without inviting priests’ attack.”

LXXXIII

“With indestructibility
“Of soul and matter, force, and Thee
“Proclaimed by Science and Church alike
“A mighty blow such men would strike
“At war and war’s iniquity.
“For who would kill if he could see
“That every unjust blow he aimed
“Would ’gainst his future lives be blamed?
“Such creed autocracy would shake.
“The tyrant at the thought would quake
“That every lash upon a slave
“Would lash himself toward future grave.
“Such creed’s the perfect Golden Rule.
“Mankind in kindness it will school.
“Such creed will work for seven days
“In every week. ’Twill lift the haze
“That comes to man from divers codes,
“And tangled trails and mixed up roads.
“ ’Twill lift injustice from our birth.
“ ’Twill spread good-will to all on earth.
“ ’Twill help all men to make their grade.
“Into a pattern, life ’twill braid.
“In place of dull futility
“ ’Twill give to life, utility.
“ ’Twill teach that man is given soul
“To use with purpose and control;
“To exercise each faculty,
“To strong in mind and body be.”

LXXXIV

"The purpose of this life's no less
"Than that of: School of Happiness.
" 'Tis here that every man must strive
"For happiness for all alive.
"This does not mean sheer self-denial,
"Or that earth-life is merely trial.
"God does not seek to harden us,
"Nor have us err, that He may pardon us.
"This life is the preparing course
"For lives of greater joy and force.
"In earth's brief lives man has to learn
"That e'en success may scorch and burn;
"That one who learns too much too fast
"Is apt to come to grief at last.
"E're man is fit to enter Heaven
"His soul through work must find its leaven."

LXXXV

"And that work is the common good,
"The common joy; Man's Brotherhood.
"That work involves the mighty task
"Of joy on earth ere Heaven we ask.
"Man must build up a Heav'n on earth
"As prelude to a higher birth.
"God dedicates to men the task
"Of earning what from Him they ask.
"Until man learned joy's lesson here
"He'd find the highest heaven drear.
"The lesson that no man may shirk
"Is that of mixing joy with work;
"Of striving both for self and all;
"Of lifting from mankind the pall
"Of stagnant minds, of dull despair;
"And making joy for all to share."

LXXXVI

“The entrance knock to Heaven’s Gates
“Is only known to graduates
“Of Earth’s High Colleges of Joy
“And Service; aye, to those who buoy
“Themselves as well as all who rest
“For happiness upon their breast.
“How else could man hope to sustain
“The happiness of higher plane,
“If not self-trained through life on life,
“Through constant and unselfish strife,
“To earn admittance, grade by grade,
“To God’s High Shrines of Bliss and Aid?”

LXXXVII

“If our creed’s wrong, O God, grant this:
“Let no man at life’s purpose hiss;
“Let no man say we’re here for naught:
“No longer let the lie be taught
“That man is merely monkey spawn;
“To consciousness, a moment’s pawn.
“And if we’re nothing, God, to Thee,
“If life is mere futility,
“Still let us, God, hold our surmise;
“Still let us, God, believe these lies.”

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